

3 Public and Agency Coordination

Agencies, nongovernmental groups, and the public have been engaged throughout the planning process for the APRCS, as required by federal law and regulation. CEQ's NEPA implementing regulations require agency and public participation in defining and evaluating the impacts of a proposed action and its alternatives (40 CFR §§ 1503.1 and 1506.6). This chapter summarizes the regulations that mandate the need for public involvement, agency and public coordination to date, the scoping process, public outreach associated with the Alternatives Analysis process, and the public hearings planned following the release of this Draft Tier 1 EIS. **Section 3.7** addresses the accommodations made for minority and low-income populations, as well as persons with disabilities, to support their involvement in the public involvement process. The final section of this chapter discusses the thorough coordination with local agencies and municipalities undertaken as part of the APRCS.

3.1 Regulatory Requirements

The APRCS public and agency participation and coordination efforts meet the requirements found in NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*) and the associated CEQ implementing regulations (40 CFR §§ 1503.1 and 1506.6). The Tier 1 EIS follows both the FTA regulations (23 CFR § 771.111) and FRA's procedures and requirements for early coordination with appropriate public agencies, public involvement, and project development.

The APRCS has also followed (23 U.S.C. § 139) when:

- defining the purpose and need (§139 [f][1]), and
- determining the range of alternatives to be considered (§139 [f][4][A]).

In addition, SAFETEA-LU 23 U.S.C. §139 (g)(1)(A) requires the preparation of a coordination plan to ensure public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a project.

The APRCS has also followed USDOT federal requirements for public participation, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (U.S.C. 1964c) and Executive Order (EO) 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Population (1994).

Public and agency coordination efforts were initiated during the scoping phase of the study, including during the development and refinement of alternatives. Coordination will continue throughout the process.

3.2 Agency Coordination

3.2.1 Coordination Plan

Title 23 U.S.C. § 139 (g)(1) requires the preparation of a plan for coordinating public and agency participation during the environmental review process. The APRCS Coordination Plan was published on April 5, 2012 and is included in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*. The purpose of the Coordination Plan was to facilitate and document the lead agencies' structured interaction with the public and other agencies as well as to inform the public and other agencies of how that interaction would be accomplished. The Coordination Plan promotes an efficient and streamlined environmental review process and project management through coordination, scheduling, and early resolution of issues. The Coordination Plan includes a Tribal Coordination Plan, which has specific coordination requirements with the various tribes having an interest in the study.

Lead, Cooperating, and Participating Agencies

The Coordination Plan identifies the lead, cooperating, and participating agencies involved in the study and defines their roles and responsibilities during the environmental review process. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has been identified as the lead federal agency, with ADOT serving as the local sponsor and proponent. Several cooperating and participating agencies have also been identified in the coordination plan as well as stakeholders. **Table 3-1** summarizes the roles and responsibilities of the lead, proponent, participating, and cooperating agencies. The Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix* includes agency correspondence.

Table 3-1. Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Agency	Agency Designation	Roles and Responsibilities
FRA	USDOT Lead	Primary responsibilities are to ensure compliance with NEPA and prepare the environmental document. Request participation from other agencies, provide project information, conduct corridor reviews, hold scoping meetings, provide pre-draft and pre-final documents; brief participating agencies prior to issuing Draft Tier 1 EIS, ensure documentation is adequate and legally sufficient for related decisions, and make final decisions on key milestones.

Table 3-1. Agency Roles and Responsibilities

Agency	Agency Designation	Roles and Responsibilities
ADOT	Local Sponsor	Serves as project sponsor. Share in the responsibility to manage the coordination process, prepare the Tier 1 EIS, and provide opportunities for public and participating/cooperating agency involvement.
FHWA and FTA	Cooperating	Participate early in the NEPA process. Participate in developing the purpose and need and alternatives and in the scoping process. Develop information and analysis/ provides staff support, participate in public involvement activities; review draft environmental documents, and provide comments.
Other Federal, State, Regional and Local Agencies	Participating	Participate in developing the purpose and need and alternatives and identify potential impacts during scoping and the Draft Tier 1 EIS.

Participating agencies include:

Federal Agencies

- Federal Aviation Administration
- National Park Service
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Bureau of Indian Affairs
- US Bureau of Land Management
- US Bureau of Reclamation
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service: Coronado National Forest
- Western Area Power Administration

State Agencies

- Arizona Air National Guard
 - Arizona Corporation Commission
 - Arizona Department of Corrections
 - Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
 - Arizona Department of Housing
 - Arizona Department of Public Safety
 - Arizona Game and Fish Department
 - Arizona State Land Department
 - Arizona State Parks
- Local and Regional Agencies
- Central Arizona Governments
 - City of Apache Junction

- City of Avondale
 - City of Casa Grande
 - City of Chandler
 - City of Coolidge
 - City of El Mirage
 - City of Eloy
 - City of Glendale
 - City of Litchfield Park
 - City of Maricopa
 - City of Mesa
 - City of Peoria
 - City of Phoenix
 - City of South Tucson
 - City of Surprise
 - City of Tempe
 - City of Tolleson
 - City of Tucson
 - Laveen Community Council
 - Maricopa Association of Governments
 - Maricopa County Department of Transportation
 - Maricopa County Flood Control District
 - Pima Association of Governments
 - Pima County
 - Pinal County
 - Town of Florence
 - Town of Gilbert
 - Town of Guadalupe
 - Town of Marana
 - Town of Oro Valley
 - Town of Queen Creek
 - Town of Youngtown
 - Tucson Department of Transportation
 - Valley Metro Regional Public Transportation Authority
- Tribes
- Ak-Chin Indian Community
 - Gila River Indian Community
 - Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
 - Transportation and Utilities
 - Central Arizona Project
 - National Railroad Passenger Corporation (AMTRAK)
 - Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority
 - Salt River Project
 - Sun Tran Tucson
 - Tucson Airport Authority

Stakeholders such as non-government and private organizations with an interest in the study were also identified in the coordination plan and invited to participate in the process.

The lead, cooperating, and participating agencies have worked cooperatively throughout the study's environmental process. During the process, the main goal has been to ensure that all agency concerns are satisfactorily addressed.

Agencies identified in the coordination plan were invited to participate by providing input to scoping, contributing to development of the purpose and need, providing input into the development and refinement of the alternatives, and identifying potential effects. Official comment periods for the public as well as for participating and cooperating agencies include the scoping period, which is now complete, and following issuance of the Draft Tier 1 EIS.

Government and Tribal Coordination

Government agencies throughout the corridor have been actively engaged in the APRCS. These agencies were sent scoping information and requests to become participating and cooperating agencies during the process. Feedback was solicited from the following government and other agencies through direct contact:

- Elected officials
- Interested organizations
- Governmental agencies and stakeholders
- Community groups

Additional participating agencies identified in the Coordination Plan and the Tribal Coordination Plan included various tribal communities in Arizona:

- Chemehuevi Indian Tribe
- Hualapai Tribe
- Cocopah Tribe
- Kaibab-Paiute Tribe
- Colorado River Indian Tribes
- Mescalero Apache Tribe
- Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
- Moapa Band of Paiute Indians
- Fort Mojave Indian Tribe
- Navajo Nation
- Fort Sill Apache Tribe
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Las Vegas
- Fort Yuma-Quechan Tribe
- Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah
- Havasupai Tribe
- Pascua Yaqui Tribe
- Hopi Tribe
- Pueblo of Zuni

- San Carlos Apache Tribe
- San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
- Tohono O’odham Nation
- Tonto Apache Indian Community
- Ute Mountain Ute
- White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Yavapai-Apache Nation
- Yavapai-Prescott Tribe

The Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix* includes a list of governments, agencies, and organizations contacted.

3.2.2 Project Kickoff Meeting with Stakeholders

On March 10, 2011, ADOT hosted the ADOT Intercity Rail Study stakeholder kickoff meeting at the Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Conference Center in Chandler, Arizona. The kickoff meeting introduced the study to participating agencies and stakeholders. The meeting was designed as an exposition, with attendees receiving an overview presentation and then participating in information-building activities at booths developed around the following themes:

- Why passenger rail in Arizona?
- Why this project now?
- Different types of rail
- Mobility benefits
- How would I get to my destination?
- Quality of life
- Economic vitality
- Can rail help shape a community?
- What about the environment?
- Stay involved

A summary of the project kickoff meeting is included in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

3.2.3 Corridor Support Team Meetings

At key points in the study process, ADOT held Corridor Support Team (CST) meetings to gain input from stakeholders and help guide the study. The CST was composed of all agencies within the corridor, with meetings held in the three study area counties to make project information

conveniently accessible. ADOT held three rounds of CST meetings during the project scoping and assessment of the alternatives in the study, as identified in the Public Involvement Plan.

June 2011 CST Meetings

ADOT held the first round of CST meetings in June 2011 on the dates and at the locations listed in **Table 3-2** below.

Table 3-2. Corridor Support Team Meetings, June 2011

Date	Location	Participants
June 21, 2011	Tucson: Tucson Convention Center	31
June 23, 2011	Coolidge: Arizona Central College	24
June 28, 2011	Phoenix: Burton Barr Library	56
Total:		111

ADOT distributed 370 email invitations on June 10, 2011, using Constant Contact, an internet-based email distribution service. The CST invitation list is included in the Scoping Report located in the Public and Agency Coordination Appendix.

The June meetings focused on developing a defensible purpose and need (Purpose and Need Workshop) and offered participants the opportunity to think critically about a potential alignment of a rail line and stations while considering land use and future development throughout the corridor. The meetings offered participants the opportunity to talk about criteria that would be used to narrow the range of alternatives and shape the final recommendation.

The meeting included a brief overview of the study, the schedule, and the purpose of the workshop. Participants then attended three workshops.

The Purpose and Need Workshop was designed to help participants understand the study process and create an appropriate purpose and need statement. Participants were encouraged to discuss passenger rail service in order to effectively identify the need for such a service as well as potential benefits and outcomes.

The Range of Alternatives Workshop offered participants the opportunity to think critically about a potential rail alignment and station locations while considering land use and future development along the corridor. Large maps were used to show corridors of the study, and yarn was used to illustrate route alternatives.

The Evaluation Framework Workshop offered participants the opportunity to talk about criteria that would be used to narrow the range of alternatives and shape the final recommendation. Five main categories (community acceptance, safety, environment, financial feasibility, and mobility) were offered to help lead the conversation.

Participants evaluated the meeting at the end of each day.

August 2012 CST Meetings

On July 19, 2012, ADOT sent 450 email invitations for the second round of CST meetings to an established list that included staff at local, regional, tribal, and state agencies. Staff included representatives from public works, economic and community development, and engineering departments.

The second round of CST meetings was held on August 15, 16, and 23, 2012, at the locations listed in **Table 3-3**. The objective of the meetings was to review the seven preliminary alternatives, rate the alternatives, and develop a plan for a local and regional system.

Table 3-3. Corridor Support Team Meetings, August 2012

Date	Location	Participants
August 15, 2012	Tucson: University of Arizona University Services Annex	24
August 16, 2012	Casa Grande: City of Casa Grande Council Chambers	15
August 23, 2012	Phoenix: Burton Barr Library	42
Total:		81

The first part of the meeting involved a brief overview of the study, the schedule and purpose of the study, and information about the input received from the public during the 2011 scoping phase. Participants were then given three cards, each with a different question, and asked to deposit the card into a colored ballot box corresponding to the appropriate preliminary alternative. The alternative rating exercise was followed by a Station Area Planning (SAP) exercise. The SAP exercise was designed to inform and educate local community staff on land use, urban form, and transportation decisions that needed to be made in order to “ready” their communities for a potential future commuter/intercity rail transit station. After the meeting, Community Readiness Assessment forms were mailed out to the municipalities to be completed and returned to ADOT. The final step was a one-on-one meeting with each community along the alternative rail corridors to review their self-assessment forms as well as discuss future planning efforts to prepare for potentially hosting a passenger rail station.

April 2013 CST Meeting

One final CST meeting was held April 13, 2013. The meeting started with a review of the study's progress and a recap of the passenger rail vision, the study process, and the preliminary alternatives being carried forward for further analysis. Three criteria were identified as contributing to the selection of the final alternatives: public input, agency input, and technical evaluation. Following a review of the alternatives, participants were engaged in an exercise designed to shape the final alternatives by identifying areas of concern, modifying alignments that had been identified, and making additional comments.

A complete summary of all CST meetings can be found in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

3.3 Public Coordination

3.3.1 ADOT Intercity Rail Study Participation Plan

The ADOT Intercity Rail Study Participation Plan was finalized on October 31, 2011. This public involvement plan was developed for the Draft Tier 1 EIS and addresses public involvement strategies to be used throughout the study (see the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*).

ADOT's goal was to have a high number of Arizonans participate in the study and provide input to ensure public support and to meet the requirements of the NEPA. To meet this goal, ADOT sought to make participation convenient by offering a variety of opportunities for personal interaction, making the information interesting and meaningful, and soliciting opinions and advice from audiences in order to improve the participation process. As public comments have been received and evaluated, the public involvement plan has been updated to ensure that coordination is timely, thorough, effective, and relevant.

A Corridor Support Team (CST) was originally formed as a direct result of the March 2011 project kickoff meeting with the intent of keeping public agency partners, the business community, and community leaders involved in the study process. The ADOT Intercity Rail Study Participation Plan established the schedule and framework for CST meetings, scoping meetings / outreach, and the alternatives analysis meetings / outreach. The plan also identified participants, values for the participants, opportunities for personal interaction, virtual participation options, publicity requirements, and earned media responsibilities.

The plan also identifies the public meeting notification procedure to follow for the scoping and AA processes. Two widely publicized public hearings were held in each of the three counties through which the corridor alternatives pass. The public meetings were duplicated in virtual format to increase convenience, thereby increasing participation. Those wishing to participate

had the opportunity to “attend” a meeting online, viewing the same information presented at the physical meetings, and submitting input directly through the website. ADOT combined the transcripts from the physical meetings and the input received online for the study record. Comments posted to ADOT’s Facebook page related to the study during this time frame also were added to the record.

3.3.2 Public Outreach Techniques

To reach as many community members as possible, ADOT used a wide variety of public involvement tools throughout the APRCS. Because of the length of the study corridor, emphasis was placed on electronic communication and on taking advantage of already scheduled events to avoid single-purpose meetings that often limit participation. Informational materials produced on an ongoing basis included public meeting announcements, brochures, media releases, fact sheets, and preference surveys that have helped indicate public preferences throughout the AA and Draft Tier 1 EIS development. ADOT has made these materials public on the ADOT website and distributed them at public events.

ADOT held corridor-wide community status updates at public events and with public and environmental resource agency staffs as the alternatives were refined and less effective options were removed from further study. Since March 2011, over 10,000 project preference surveys have been completed by members of the public, both in person and through the project website. These surveys have led to a better understanding of what individuals within the corridor communities believe is important and which alternatives best meet their expectations.

3.3.3 Identification of Environmental Justice Populations during Public Outreach

Public and agency outreach was undertaken throughout the corridor and communicated widely by a variety of outlets and sources during the study. At a Tier 1 EIS level of analysis, with no specific alignment or project identified and only a broad corridor definition, identifying specific environmental justice populations that could be disproportionately affected was not feasible. Potentially affected minority and low-income populations represent about 45 percent and 16 percent, respectively, of the study corridor, but insufficient information exists to identify how many of them, if any, could be affected. As a result, the Tier 1 EIS relied on broad demographic information for public outreach, as well as the discussion on Title VI and Environmental Justice in **Chapter 5, Existing Conditions and Environmental Consequences**, rather than a targeted localized analysis to identify potentially affected populations. In Tier 2 analyses, with a specific alignment or alignments under consideration, the effects of a project on environmental justice populations will be more thoroughly investigated following FTA’s Environmental Justice Policy Guidance (FTA 2012) and incorporated into the public involvement element of the work.

3.4 Scoping for the Draft Tier 1 EIS

Scoping was conducted early in the APRCS process to identify major issues and help establish the scope of the NEPA analysis. The main goals of scoping were to:

- Inform stakeholders and the public about the APRCS and its intent
- Identify key concerns of stakeholders and the public regarding passenger rail service in this region
- Identify environmental issues
- Identify opportunities beyond those already presented in previous studies

Scoping meetings were designed for two audiences, resulting in two separate scoping meeting agendas: one for agencies and one for the general public.

Meeting times and locations were advertised through a variety of avenues including but not limited to the *Federal Register*, local newspapers in each affected county, direct invitations, social media, the ADOT website, email, television, and radio.

3.4.1 Notification Techniques

Notice of Intent

FRA and FTA published the Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Tier 1 EIS in the October 6, 2011, *Federal Register*.

The NOI alerted interested parties of the EIS process; solicited public and agency input on the scope of a Tier 1 EIS; and provided information on the nature of the analysis to be conducted, the purpose and need for the proposed action, the possible alternatives to be considered in the preparation of the Tier 1 EIS, and potentially significant impacts to the natural and built environment associated with those alternatives. The notice invited public participation in the EIS process. The dates, times, and locations of public scoping meetings were announced in the NOI along with comment submission directions and the comment closing date. All interested parties were invited to submit comments on or before November 4, 2011. The comment period was later extended to November 14, 2011.

The NOI reported the date, time, and location of public scoping meetings to be held in each of the three counties associated with the study:

- Maricopa County - October 11, 2011. Burton Barr Central Library, 1221 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- Pima County - October 13, 2011. Pima Community College, Northwest Campus, 7600 North Shannon Road, Tucson, AZ, from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.
- Pinal County - October 19, 2011. Central Arizona College, Signal Peak Campus, 8470 North Overfield Road, Coolidge, AZ from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

A copy of the NOI is included in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

Legal Advertisements and Additional Scoping Notification

In addition to the advertisement in the *Federal Register*, newspaper legal advertisements were placed in daily newspapers associated with each of the four counties. These advertisements not only alerted the agencies and public to the NOI public hearings but also invited interested parties to attend open houses and events on the same subject on other dates in other locations within the counties.

Paid legal and display advertisements, as listed in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*, announced the public scoping open houses and events in local and regional newspapers between September and October 2011 to comply with NEPA requirements. **Table 3-4** lists the newspapers and dates of publication for these advertisements.

Table 3-4. Public Scoping Open House and Event Newspaper Advertisements

Newspaper	Publication Dates	Advertisement Type
Arizona Daily Star	September 22 and 27, 2011	Legal Ad
Arizona Republic	September 22 and 27, 2011	Legal Ad
TriValley Central	September 21 and 22, 2011	Legal Ad
TriValley Central	October 12, 2011	Display Ad

The legal advertisements alerted the public that FRA, FTA, and ADOT were preparing an AA and EIS to study the proposed development of passenger rail service between Tucson and Phoenix. The notice invited the public to several open houses and events to be held in Pima, Pinal, and Maricopa counties in order to solicit public input on the scope of the project. The legal ads offered special assistance, such as sign language interpretation, and provided a contact person so that special arrangements could be made at the open houses and events. Copies of the legal advertisements are included in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

Extensive email list distribution, media releases, social media communication, and earned media resulting from interest in the study were relied upon to make the scoping process known

to interested stakeholders and the public. Television, radio, and print/online media also covered the initial meeting and the scoping process. The details of the notification effort are listed in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

Additional information regarding publicity and notices is included in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

3.4.2 Scoping Activities and Events

Agency Scoping

On October 4, 2011, ADOT distributed 111 scoping meeting invitations to state and local agencies as well as to Tribes. Attachments to the meeting invitations included a meeting agenda, study segment map, description of the segment areas, schedule of study milestones, comment form, and a state map showing the study area. All the identified stakeholders and CST members were invited to participate in the meeting and webinar.

The agency scoping meeting was held at ADOT's downtown Phoenix campus on October 11, 2011. This meeting was also conducted as a webinar to accommodate participants throughout the study area.

The meeting started with a PowerPoint presentation which described the study, the AA/Tier 1 EIS process, and the study objectives. This was followed by a presentation of the environmental issues known to date followed by a discussion of the agency mandate, the agency's decision-making process, and the agency's key interests. The final three segments of the meeting included a presentation of the potential controversial issues associated with the passenger rail study, how to ensure a successful agency coordination process, and specific recommended actions for moving forward. The meeting was then opened for discussion followed by a question and answer period.

A total of 66 agency representatives attended the meeting in person, and 34 participated via webinar. During the meeting, questions were asked about noise modeling, required agreements with the Gila River Indian Community regarding the proposed corridor through their land, ridership projections, whether FTA would allow ADOT to conduct ridership modeling, the point at which changes can be made to the plan, and the time frame for the EIS process.

By the end of the day on November 14, 2011, 14 agencies and stakeholders submitted written comments to ADOT. Eight of the comments were in letter or memo format, four were on the supplied comment forms, and two were email messages.

Most comments were regarding flooding concerns, impacts to wildlife corridors, habitat impacts, and impacts to priority vulnerable species.

The agency scoping meeting summary and examples of the invitation and materials distributed are included in the Scoping Report located in the Public and Agency Coordination Appendix.

Public Scoping Open Houses and Events

ADOT held scoping open houses and events in Pima, Pinal, and Maricopa counties beginning on October 7, 2011, with the final event held on November 1, 2011. A total of 141 people signed in at the scoping open houses, and hundreds more stopped by ADOT booths at community events and spoke with ADOT members.

The scoping process included eight public scoping open houses and four public events. The locations are shown in **Table 3-5** and **Table 3-6**, respectively.

Table 3-5. Public Scoping Open House Locations

Date	City	Location/Address	Attendees
10/11/11	Phoenix	Burton Barr Library: Auditorium 1221 North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ	51
10/13/11	Tucson	Pima Community College: Northwest Campus 7600 North Shannon Road, Tucson, AZ	16
10/18/11	Florence	Town of Florence Town Hall 775 North Main Street, Florence AZ	7
10/19/11	Coolidge	Central Arizona College: Signal Peak Campus 8470 North Overfield Road, Coolidge, AZ	6
10/24/11	Chandler	Chandler Downtown Library 22 S. Delaware Street, Chandler, AZ	13
10/25/11	Eloy	City of Eloy Council Chambers 628 North Main Street, Eloy, AZ	9
10/27/11	Casa Grande	City of Casa Grande Council Chambers 510 East Florence Blvd., Casa Grande, AZ	21
11/1/11	Mesa	Mesa Main Library 64 East First Street, Mesa, AZ	18

The scoping open houses provided participants an opportunity to ask the project team questions as well as submit feedback. These open houses featured displays and exhibits detailing the analysis area and AA and NEPA process. Participants were asked to register to

receive future communication follow-up and were given an informative booklet and comment form.

A primary element of participation was a video lasting slightly less than 2 minutes. A running video presentation provided an overview of the NEPA and AA process. The video was available online and on a digital video disc (DVD). The video was accompanied by a 12-page booklet and a 12-question survey. The booklet and survey, which contained basic project information as well as the 12 questions, were available in hard copy and online. The online survey was available between October 7 and November 14, 2011. The public scoping booklet, scoping comment form, copies of the scoping event exhibits, and photos of the events are included in the Scoping Report located in the Public and Agency Coordination Appendix.

In addition to traditional public open houses, ADOT sought out and, when possible, attended community events scheduled during the scoping period. To supplement the open houses, exhibits were set up at selected local community events within the study area. Participation in these events maximized ADOT's ability to engage the public in their local surroundings. The table below includes the locations of these public events.

Table 3-6. Public Scoping Events

Date	Location/Address
10/7/11	University of Arizona: Campus Mall 1303 East University Boulevard, Tucson, AZ
10/8/11	Second Saturdays Downtown 44 North Stone Avenue, Tucson, AZ
10/12/11	Arizona State University: Campus Mall Tempe, AZ 85287
10/14/11 through 10/16/11 (3-day event)	Tucson Meet Yourself - Event Exhibitor Booth Pima County Plaza, 130 West Congress Street, Tucson AZ

Additional Scoping Activities

Project Website

The ADOT project website (www.azdot.gov/passengerrail) also served as a primary tool for communication during the scoping process. Stakeholders and members of the public could access additional study information, maps, and meeting materials on this site. The survey distributed at open houses and events was also made available for electronic completion on the website.

The following information is available on the website:

- Previous study overview documents
- Environmental process information
- Information about different types of rail transit and technologies
- Case studies about the impact of passenger rail service
- Stakeholder meeting presentations
- Statement of project need
- Calendar of events
- CST meeting material
- Maps of corridor alternatives
- Do-It-Yourself Participation Kits

To make participation as accessible as possible, and understanding that not all people have Internet access or the ability to attend a meeting or event, ADOT also offered Do-It-Yourself participation kits, which included a DVD of the short project video, copies of the scoping booklet and comment form, and postage-paid envelopes to return the comment form. People were able to request kits for as many people as they would like by calling the project hotline (see below), emailing the project team, faxing ADOT's Community Relations Division, or mailing a written request to ADOT Community Relations. A total of 31 kits were requested and mailed.

Project Hotline

An automated project hotline was established as an additional means of soliciting feedback. Respondents were free to leave comments for the study team on this hotline. All calls received were requests for Do-It-Yourself Participation Kits, which were shipped upon request.

3.4.3 Public Scoping Comments

Between October 7, 2011, and November 14, 2011, ADOT received 3,075 written comment submissions. This includes 2,784 survey responses along with 291 additional comment submissions that did not follow the survey format. The survey results are presented in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

Summary of Comments

In general, comments reflected a need for an additional transportation option between Tucson and Phoenix and a preference for rail. Traveling I-10 by car is often not viewed favorably due to

heavy truck traffic, dust storms, and crashes, making many people likely to avoid the trip. Respondents indicated that if they had a viable alternative, they would make the trip more frequently.

The primary themes identified from the responses listed in **Table 3-7** helped the APRCS team analyze the data. Many of the 3,075 respondents had multiple comments in their submissions, yielding 14,218 unique public scoping comments that pertained to these six primary categories. Additional unique scoping comments did not fit into these common themes.

For each of the six key comment categories, an individual table of subcategories was prepared. These are included in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*. The information provided a good indication of the issues that need to be addressed in the technical analysis, which is a primary purpose of scoping.

Among the comments received, slightly over 6 percent indicated opposition to some element of passenger rail between Tucson and Phoenix. The majority of the opposed comments cited:

- Concerns about using taxpayer dollars to fund a rail project
- Fixing problems on I-10 before building something that is not an absolute necessity

Table 3-7. Public Scoping Comment Themes

Comment Category	# Unique Comments	% of Total Unique Comments
Mobility	6,858	48%
Environment	1,858	13%
Operational Characteristics	1,841	13%
Safety and Security	1,720	12%
Financial Feasibility	1,199	8%
Economic Development	742	5%
Total Comments in Comment Theme Categories	14,218	

Mobility

Forty-eight percent of the comments received related to mobility. Mobility between Tucson and Phoenix is unreliable because I-10, the only major corridor between the two major urban areas, is congested; and, as such, an alternative transportation option is viewed as an improvement to mobility.

Environment

Thirteen percent of the comments received related to the environment. In general, respondents did not view a new high-capacity travel choice as having a negative impact. The exception to this would be if the facility were located outside an existing transportation corridor. People who favor passenger rail said they would oppose a system that would forge a new corridor and adversely affect the natural environment. Air quality improvements were listed most often in terms of environmental issues, and “green” or “sustainable” were words used to describe a desirable transportation option.

Operational Characteristics

Thirteen percent of the comments received related to operational characteristics. People said they wanted a train with fewer stops that can travel at a higher speed.

In addition, responses frequently mentioned intermodal connections at stations. Although the light rail system in the metropolitan Phoenix area has expanded the Arizona public’s view with regard to public transportation, more than 3,500 comments expressed concern about reaching a final destination after alighting a train. People indicated that they would ride the train if connections were available but communicated a sense of skepticism because these connections are not already in place.

Safety and Security

Twelve percent of the comments received related to safety and security. Driving on I-10 is viewed as challenging. Due to high traffic volumes, high truck traffic volumes, accidents, and dust storms, many people said they feel unsafe making the trip by car. A desire for another transportation option was clear in the comments.

Financial Feasibility

Eight percent of the comments received related to financial feasibility. Comments relating to financial feasibility tended to correlate with respondents indicating an opposition to rail, although some (approximately 1 percent) were in favor of or neutral toward rail and mentioned financial feasibility as a factor.

Economic Development

Five percent of the comments received related to the economic development. Respondents expressed the opinion that a link exists between the development of a transportation option and economic development, primarily indicating that such an option would spur global competitiveness and economic growth.

3.5 Alternatives Analysis (AA) Public Outreach

In addition to the extensive scoping outreach conducted, two phases of public participation, which included extensive communication with stakeholders and the public throughout the corridor, were held during the preparation of the AA and leading to the identification of the alternatives to be analyzed in the Draft Tier 1 EIS. The outreach programs were held in Fall 2012 and Spring 2014 at public venues in conjunction with scheduled events in communities within the corridor. These responses helped to reduce the number of alternatives considered during the evaluation process from the approximately 150 possible original corridors to 7, and eventually to the final 2 corridor alternatives evaluated in detail in the Draft Tier 1 EIS.

3.5.1 Notification of Public Outreach

Several strategies were employed to encourage community participation and receive feedback from Arizonans during the AA process. Publicity and notices are detailed below and are included in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

Paid display advertisements announced the beginning of the outreach process and directed readers to the study website for dates and locations where information would be available.

Table 3-8, below, details the publications and dates of these advertisements.

Table 3-8. October 2012 Outreach Newspaper Advertisements

Newspaper	Publication Date
Apache Junction News	October 15, 2012
Arizona Daily Star	October 10, 2012
Arizona Republic	October 14, 2012
Coolidge Examiner	October 10, 2012
East Valley Tribune	October 10, 2012
Eloy Enterprise	October 11, 2012
Florence Reminder/Blade Tribune	October 11, 2012
Maricopa Monitor	October 12, 2012
TriValley Dispatch	October 10, 2012
Tucson Weekly	October 11, 2012

3.5.2 Alternatives Analysis Events

The AA process included ADOT participation in an information booth at 16 community events. As a result of the efforts, ADOT was able to reach out to community members who would not

have otherwise participated. Information booklets, reporting what was heard from the public the previous year, maps of all seven alternatives being considered at this stage of the study, a high-level evaluation of the alternatives, a comment form, and self-addressed prepaid envelope were distributed at the events. In total, ADOT passed out 1,909 booklets. Additionally, the events provided participants an opportunity to ask ADOT questions regarding the study as well as submit feedback.

Each information booth was staffed by two to three ADOT representatives, accompanied by the following displays and information:

- 10-foot by 10-foot tent with a 6-foot table
- “Add your voice” branding banner
- Two A-frame display boards of the alternatives
- Detailed table display of all seven alternatives
- Informational takeaway booklet with comment form, postage-paid envelope, and link to the project website/electronic participation materials
- Promotional items printed with project branding such as drink cozies, keychain flashlights, magnetic chip clips, and microfiber eyeglass cleaning wipes

The information booklet and the comment form are included in the Scoping Report located in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*. Photos of the events are also included in the Scoping Report. The locations and dates of events attended by ADOT members are listed in **Table 3-9**.

Table 3-9. Fall 2012-Spring 2013 Outreach Events

Date	City	Location/Address
10/6/12	Coolidge	Coolidge Days San Carlos Park, Coolidge
10/12/12 - 10/14/12	Tucson	Tucson Meet Yourself Downtown Tucson
10/17/12	Phoenix	CityScape Lunch Hour Washington and 1st Avenue in Downtown Phoenix
10/20/12	Maricopa	Stagecoach Days Pacana Park, Maricopa
10/27/12	Gilbert	Gilbert Fall Music and Halloween Festival Freestone Park, Gilbert

Table 3-9. Fall 2012-Spring 2013 Outreach Events

Date	City	Location/Address
10/27/12 – 10/28/12	Phoenix	Arizona State Fair Arizona State Fairgrounds, Phoenix
11/6/12	Casa Grande	Art in the Alley “The Alley” behind the Cook E Jar Restaurant, Casa Grande
11/9/12	Mesa	Mesa 2nd Friday Night Out Main Street, Mesa
11/10/12	Tucson	U of A on the Mall University of Arizona Campus, Tucson
11/10/12	Tucson	Tucson Second Saturday Downtown Tucson, Tucson
11/10/12	Chandler	Rock the Block Dr. A.J. Chandler Park
11/14/12	Tempe	ASU on the Mall Arizona State University Campus
11/16/12	Gilbert	28th Annual Gilbert 5k and 1-Mile Run Freestone Park, Gilbert
11/17/12	Phoenix	Harvest Festival Encanto Park, Phoenix
12/1/12	Marana	Marana Holiday Festival and Tree Lighting Municipal Complex Courtyard, Marana
12/2/12	Phoenix	F.Q. Story Historic District Home Tours Downtown Phoenix
12/8/12- 12/9/12	Mesa	Mesa Arts Festival Mesa Arts Center
3/16/13- 3/18/13	Sacaton	Mul-Chu-Tha Rodeo and Fair Sacaton Fairgrounds

3.5.3 Project Website

The project website (www.azdot.gov/passengerrail) continued as a primary tool for communication during the Fall 2012 outreach process. Stakeholders and community members could access additional study information, including potential alternatives. Over the course of the two-month outreach process, the website was viewed 23,591 times.

Stakeholders and community members could access additional study information that had been added since the scoping process.

3.5.4 Results of the Fall 2012-Spring 2013 Public Outreach

Community outreach efforts generated a significant amount of data and survey responses between October and December 2012. Public involvement statistics from this period include:

- 1,909 Information booklets were distributed
- 3,599 survey responses were collected, both physically and online
- 543 emails in support of rail were received
- 11 formal letters were submitted
- 922 individuals asked to be included in the study email distribution list

In general, comments reflected strong support for passenger rail between Tucson and Phoenix. Many respondents felt that rail is the future and were happy to see that alternative travel options were being studied. It was clear that a balance between time of travel and serving the most population centers was important, along with financial feasibility. The following pages present the information collected from the survey responses.

Question 1: For each alternative, please indicate your preference for each one using one of the following rankings:

1. Strongly in Favor of
2. In Favor of
3. Neither in Favor of nor Against
4. Against
5. Strongly Against

The main focus of the surveying instrument was to identify which of the seven alternatives from this stage of the study were favored among the community. Below are trends ADOT heard from the community at the events.

Blue Alternative:

- Better than nothing
- Could serve as an interim solution to build ridership

Green Alternative:

- Provides fast travel time and most direct route

Orange Alternative:

- Connects Tucson International, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway, and Phoenix Sky Harbor airports
- Connects universities and the East Valley

Purple Alternative:

- Connects Cities of Casa Grande, Chandler, and Tempe
- Provides an economic development opportunity for the GRIC
- Route provides a balance between the East Valley, I-10, and communities to the west

Red Alternative:

- Provides the best access to Maricopa
- Potential to connect to existing Amtrak station

Teal Alternative:

- Connects population centers, including the East Valley
- Proposes fewer stops than the other routes through the East Valley

Yellow Alternative:

- Recognition that it could use existing UP right-of-way
- Connects population centers in the East Valley

Questions 2 and 3: In what city/town would you most likely get on the train or bus and get off the train or bus?

The survey asked participants their home and work zip codes to identify the locations from which responses were provided. Using only the home zip code data, the team identified that 98 percent of those who provided this information live in Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties; and 59 percent live in Tucson, Phoenix, and Mesa.

Table 3-10 and **Table 3-11**, respectively, indicate the number of responses received based on city and county.

Table 3-10. Fall 2012-Spring 2013 Responses by City

City	Responses	Percent of Total	City	Responses	Percent of Total
1. Tucson	904	39.3%	25. Eloy	8	0.3%
2. Phoenix	367	16.0%	26. Laveen	7	0.3%
3. Mesa	119	5.2%	27. Paradise Valley	7	0.3%

Table 3-10. Fall 2012-Spring 2013 Responses by City

City	Responses	Percent of Total	City	Responses	Percent of Total
4. Tempe	96	4.2%	28. Sun City	6	0.3%
5. Chandler	91	4.0%	29. Sahuarita	6	0.3%
6. Gilbert	86	3.7%	30. Gold Canyon	6	0.3%
7. Casa Grande	86	3.7%	31. Cave Creek	5	0.2%
8. Scottsdale	64	2.8%	32. Fountain Hills	5	0.2%
9. Maricopa	61	2.7%	33. Buckeye	4	0.2%
10. San Tan Valley	49	2.1%	34. El Mirage	4	0.2%
11. Glendale	49	2.1%	35. New River	3	0.1%
12. Queen Creek	38	1.7%	36. Tolleson	3	0.1%
13. Surprise	31	1.3%	37. Waddell	3	0.1%
14. Peoria	30	1.3%	38. Oracle	3	0.1%
15. Marana	25	1.1%	39. Sacaton	3	0.1%
16. Vail	22	1.0%	40. Kearny	2	0.1%
17. Goodyear	21	0.9%	41. Unknown	2	0.1%
18. Florence	15	0.7%	42. Luke Air Force Base	1	0.0%
19. Coolidge	12	0.5%	43. Wittman	1	0.0%
20. Avondale	11	0.5%	44. Youngtown	1	0.0%
21. Litchfield Park	11	0.5%	45. Cortaro	1	0.0%
22. Apache Junction	11	0.5%	46. Nogales	1	0.0%
23. Green Valley	9	0.4%	47. Mammoth	1	0.0%
24. Arizona City	8	0.3%			
TOTAL			2,299		

Table 3-11. Fall 2012-Spring 2013 Responses by County

County	Responses	Percent of Total
Maricopa	1,065	45.32%
Pima	968	41.12%
Pinal	266	11.32%
Other	51	2.17%
TOTAL	2,350	

Taking a closer look at the responses, ADOT used zip code data to identify the cities and towns from which respondents were commuting back and forth. The top 10 cities and towns of commutes are detailed in **Table 3-12**. The data in **Table 3-12** show that a majority of the

respondents live and work in the same city. A total of 19 respondents stated they commute between Tucson and Phoenix (13 originating in Phoenix and 6 originating in Tucson).

Table 3-12. Top Ten Commute Cities

Origin City	Destination City									
	Casa Grande	Chandler	Gilbert	Maricopa	Mesa	Phoenix	San Tan Valley	Scottsdale	Tempe	Tucson
Casa Grande	48	3	0	0	0	5	0	1	3	2
Chandler	1	38	2	1	5	22	0	4	15	2
Gilbert	0	7	33	1	8	14	0	2	9	1
Maricopa	2	4	0	25	2	13	0	1	3	1
Mesa	1	1	5	0	64	24	0	4	12	2
Phoenix	2	5	0	2	4	287	0	20	17	6
San Tan Valley	0	2	3	0	6	7	20	2	3	0
Scottsdale	0	1	0	0	0	19	0	33	7	1
Tempe	1	1	2	1	2	17	0	6	44	2
Tucson	0	0	1	0	4	13	0	4	2	862

Question 4: What ways would you plan on arriving at the rail or bus station to begin your trip?

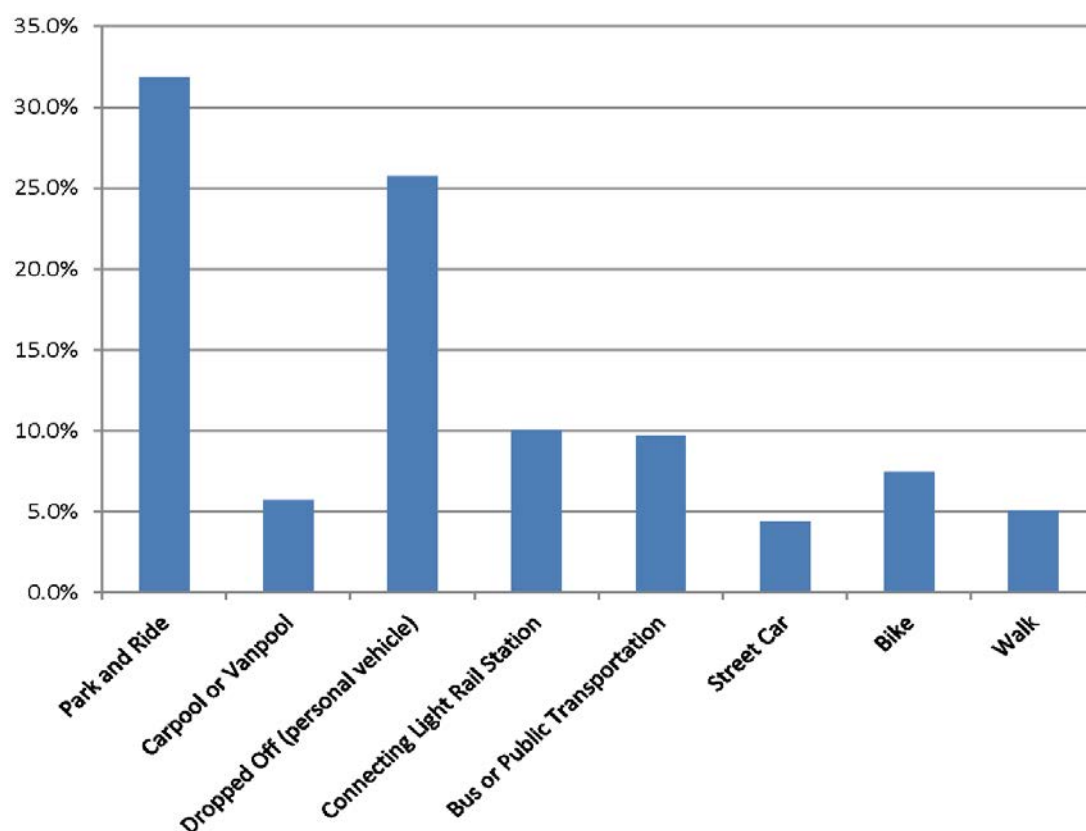
ADOT asked participants what modes of transportation would be used to access rail or bus stations. **Table 3-13** shows the results.

Table 3-13. Responses by Access Mode

Mode	Park and Ride	Carpool or Vanpool	Dropped Off (personal vehicle)	Connecting Light Rail Station	Bus or Public Transportation	Street Car	Bike	Walk
Responses	2,367	426	1,912	746	722	326	553	377
Percentage	31.9%	5.7%	25.7%	10.0%	9.7%	4.4%	7.4%	5.1%

Participants were asked to select their top three choices. Potential user preference by access mode is shown graphically in **Figure 3-1**. The top three modes of arriving at a bus or rail station are:

1. Park and Ride
2. Dropped Off (Personal Vehicle)
3. Connecting Light Rail Station

Figure 3-1. Responses by Access Mode

Question 5: What do you need to have available at the rail or bus station to arrive at your final destination? **Table 3-14** shows the distribution of the departure mode at the destination end of the trip.

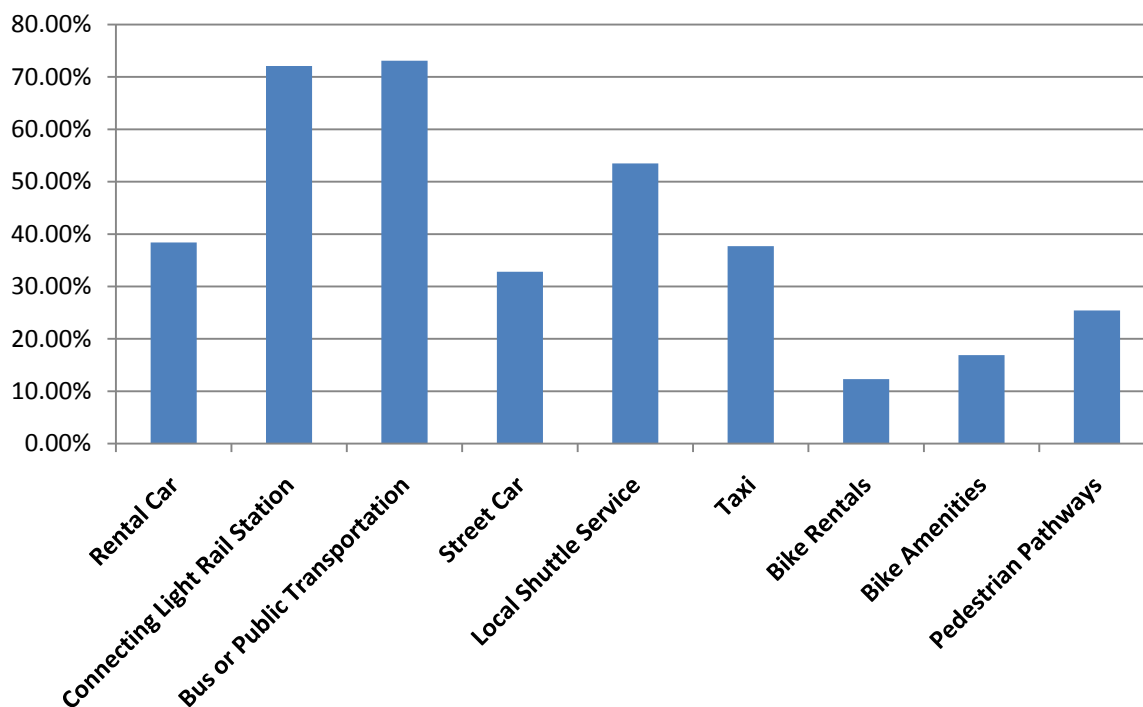
Table 3-14. Responses by Departure Mode

Mode	Rental Car	Connecting Light Rail Station	Bus or Public Transportation	Street Car	Local Shuttle Service	Taxi	Bike Rentals	Bike Amenities	Pedestrian Pathways
Responses	1,041	1,955	1,984	890	1,451	1,023	334	459	690
Percentage	38.4%	72.1%	73.1%	32.8%	53.5%	37.7%	12.3%	16.9%	25.4%

Participants were asked to select their top three choices. Potential user preference by departure mode is shown graphically in **Figure 3-2**. The top three modes of departing from a bus or rail station to complete a trip were:

1. Bus
2. Connecting Light Rail Station
3. Local Shuttle Service

Figure 3-2. Responses by Departure Mode



Question 6: Rank the following criteria that will be used to help evaluate the alternative, with one being the most important and six the least important:

The order in which the priorities were ranked by participants is as follows:

1. Community Acceptance
2. Financial Feasibility
3. Safety
4. Mobility
5. Environment

6. Operating Characteristics

The results of the participant preferences are shown in **Table 3-15**.

Table 3-15. Priority of Evaluation Categories

Ranking Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	Average Ranking
Community Acceptance	723	510	405	359	361	379	3.10
Environment	431	429	495	410	429	576	3.62
Financial Feasibility	625	545	495	418	328	356	3.13
Operating Characteristics	325	413	502	547	496	419	3.64
Mobility	437	502	434	442	505	416	3.48
Safety	568	401	446	467	481	457	3.45

3.5.5 Spring 2014 Alternatives Analysis Public Outreach

The public and agency outreach associated with the final alternatives began in the fall of 2013, but was postponed until Spring 2014. During the intervening time, the alternatives and the information to be shared during the public outreach program were further refined to help gain as much public and agency input about the key factors identified in the Level 2 outreach.

Notification of Public Outreach

In the spring of 2014, public comments, stakeholder input, and technical analysis led to the narrowing of seven alternatives in Level 2 to three final alternatives in Level 3. The outreach effort in the spring of 2014 focused on eliciting the public's and agency's preferences among the three remaining options.

News releases were issued by ADOT on March 4, April 2, and May 12, 2014, to encourage participation in the outreach process. These news releases resulted in extensive media coverage in press, radio, and television. At least 24 media sources produced articles on the study and broadcast them throughout communities in the corridor.

Alternatives Analysis Events

As in previous levels of the outreach program, the AA public process included ADOT participation in an information booth at 13 community events throughout the corridor as indicated in **Table 3-16**. An updated information booklet was prepared with the latest information available from the study, including the findings from earlier outreach, maps of the three Final Alternatives with defining characteristics and performance information, a comment

form, and self-addressed prepaid envelope. These were distributed at the events and available on the ADOT project website. In total, ADOT distributed 1,400 booklets during the Level 3 Outreach. Additionally, as before, the events provided participants an in-person opportunity to discuss the project with study team members as well as submit feedback.

Table 3-16. Spring 2014 Outreach Events

Date	City	Location/Address
3/7/14	Chandler	Ostrich Festival
3/8/14		2250 S. McQueen Road, Chandler
3/15/14	Gila River	Mul-Chu Tha Sacaton Fairgrounds
3/28/14	Tempe	Tempe Festival of the Arts
3/29/14		Mill Avenue, Tempe
3/30/14		
4/5/14	Marana	Marana Main Street Festival Main Street and Civic Center Drive, Marana
4/5/14	Peoria	Peoria Arts Festival Osuna Park, 10510 N 83 rd , Peoria
4/12/14	Gilbert	Gilbert Global Village Festival Gilbert Civic Center
4/15/14	Mesa	ADOT SR 24 Opening Event State Route 24, Mesa
4/16/14	Tucson	City of Tucson Downtown Stone Avenue and Pennington Street
4/17/14	Tucson	University of Arizona University Blvd. and Tyndall Blvd., Tucson
4/18/14	Tucson	Pima County Fair
4/19/14		Old Pueblo Hall, Pima County Fairgrounds, Tucson
4/26/14	Mesa	Celebrate Mesa Pioneer Park, 526 E. Main Street, Mesa
5/15/14	Phoenix	CityScape Washington Street at 1 st Street, Phoenix
6/17/14	Florence	Florence Chamber of Commerce Holiday Inn Express, 240 W. Highway 287

Project Website

As with earlier outreach phases, the project website (www.azdot.gov/passengerrail) continued to be a primary tool for communication of project-related information. Interested citizens could

access additional study information at any time and could submit project preferences and surveys. Over the course of the four-month outreach process between March and June 2014, 7,873 individuals viewed the website.

Results of the Spring 2014 Outreach Effort

During Level 3 public outreach, 1,400 information booklets were distributed; and 5,085 surveys, plus an additional 43 emails/letters, were received. The comments were generally consistent with previous outreach findings, with strong support for a rail option between Tucson and Phoenix. The public placed a high priority on short travel time, system reliability, and minimizing the cost of the trip for passengers.

Paired Attribute Comparison

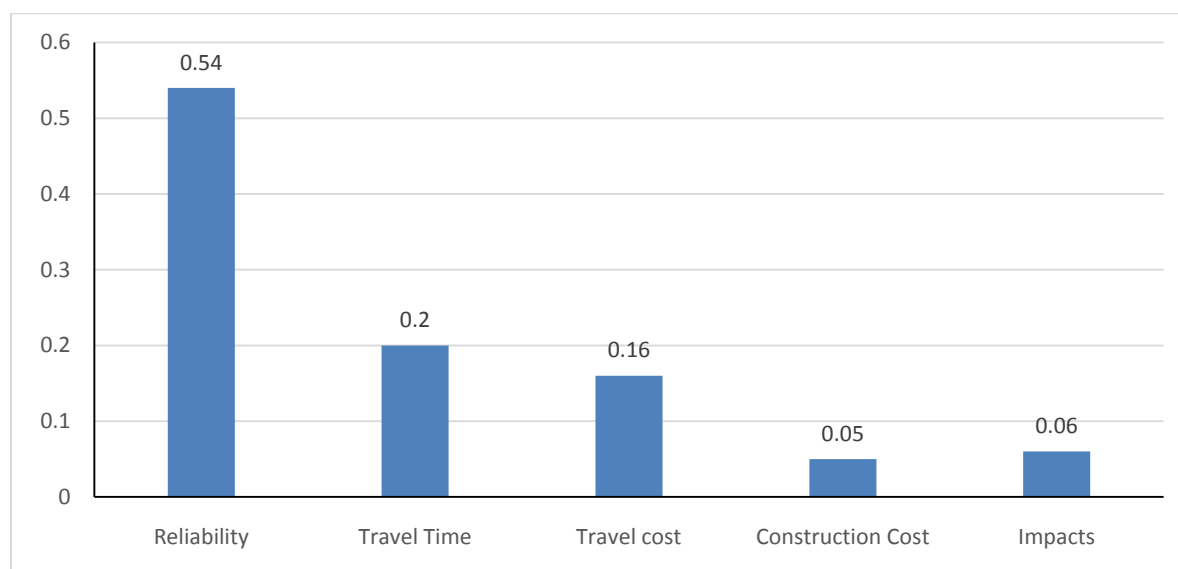
For the Level 3 Outreach, an additional technique was used to collect more focused information about project priorities from survey participants. In cooperation with the University of Arizona, the survey instrument used in Level 3 was modified to include a paired comparison of some of the proposed rail alternatives' attributes to assess preferences in more depth than a simple question about preferred alternatives. The surveys distributed included random questions about the critical features or characteristics of the study alternatives compared to each other to test the strength of the preferences when asked in different contexts. For example, a comparison of travel speed to the cost of the trip might assign a higher priority to trip cost, but a comparison of travel speed to reliability of service might suggest travel speed is more important. By comparing the results among select pairings, the priorities for various features among the participants can be expected to emerge. While the survey was not designed to be statistically valid, the large number of responses adds a level of confidence to the results and provides insight into what attributes associated with a passenger rail system are most valued.

On a straight preference basis, among the three Final Alternatives, excluding the No Build Alternative, the Yellow Alternative is supported by 46 percent of the nearly 4,000 participants who responded to that question. The Green was preferred by 32 percent and the Orange by 22 percent. In addition to the overall preference, reviewing the attribute (key decision variable) comparisons produced the results shown in **Table 3-17**.

Table 3-17. Paired Comparisons of Select Features

Features Selected for Comparison	Number	Percent of Total
Policy Q1 – Travel Time vs. Cost of Construction		
<i>Provide fastest overall travel time</i>	1,203	79.20%
<i>Limit cost of construction</i>	316	20.80%
Policy Q2 – Reliability vs. Impacts to Private Property		
<i>Limit service disruptions and maintains schedule reliability</i>	1,208	79.63%
<i>Limit impacts to private property</i>	309	20.37%
Policy Q3 – Cost of Trip vs. Cost of Construction		
<i>Limit the cost of the trip</i>	1,301	78.71%
<i>Limit the cost of construction</i>	352	21.29%
Policy Q4 – Reliability vs. Cost of Trip		
<i>Limit service disruptions and maintains schedule reliability</i>	1,352	81.59%
<i>Limit the cost of a trip</i>	305	18.41%
Policy Q5 – Cost of Construction vs. Impacts to Private Property		
<i>Limit the cost of construction</i>	545	54.12%
<i>Limit impacts to private property</i>	462	45.88%
Policy Q6 – Cost of Trip vs. Travel Time		
<i>Limit cost of trip</i>	425	42.00%
<i>Provide fastest overall travel time</i>	587	58.00%

The results in **Figure 3-3** show the significance of the variables among the respondents.

Figure 3-3. Relative Weights of Key Decision Variables

Reliability is the clear priority for those responding to the survey, while construction cost and impacts to private property are less important. More detail about this process can be found in the *Public and Agency Coordination Appendix*.

3.6 Public Hearings

As part of the NEPA process, the Draft Tier 1 EIS is being circulated for a 45-day review and comment period. During this period, the document is being made available to interested and concerned parties, including residents, property owners, community groups, the business community, elected officials, and public agencies.

A series of formal public hearings will be held during this 45-day period, with one hearing in each county of the study corridor. The purpose of the hearings is to give interested parties an opportunity to formally submit comments on the Draft Tier 1 EIS. Attendance at the hearings is not required to submit comments. Responses to substantive comments received will be addressed in the Final Tier 1 EIS.

3.7 Accommodations for Minority, Low-Income, and Persons with Disabilities

All public meetings were held in handicapped-accessible facilities in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Every effort has been made to respond to members of the public who require a sign language interpreter, an assistive learning system, a translator, or other accommodations to facilitate participation in the planning process. Meetings throughout the corridor were held at different times of day and in all geographic regions and accommodated disabled participants.

EO 12898 requires that, as part of the environmental evaluation of the alternatives, the EIS must address environmental justice issues. To comply with this requirement, community demographics and socioeconomic impacts were considered in analyzing the alternatives. The public participation process ensures “full and fair participation by potentially affected communities” throughout the duration of the study.

3.8 Additional Agency Coordination

In addition to the engagement and outreach techniques described previously in this chapter, individual meetings were held with nearly all local municipal participating agencies within the study area throughout the study process. This coordination included briefings to local municipal staff as well as formal presentations to elected municipal boards, committees, and councils. Additionally, multiple meetings were held with the communities located along the three final corridor alternatives (Green, Orange, and Yellow) defined as part of the Alternatives Analysis

(AA) throughout the APRCS. This was done to update those particular communities on study progress and corridor alternative selection decisions.

As the more viable corridor alternatives began to take shape, it was apparent that certain agencies required further coordination to assist with the analysis of potential corridor impacts and identification of fatal flaws. These agencies included the commercial airports (Phoenix Sky Harbor, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway, and the Tucson International Airport), the Arizona Game and Fish Department, UP, major universities in the region, and the GRIC. The project team met with UP multiple times to discuss potential impacts to their freight rail corridors located throughout the study area and within the corridor alternatives.

FRA initiated formal tribal consultation process with GRIC. The project team met with GRIC staff and committees during different stages of the study and ultimately presented on corridor alternative selection decisions to the GRIC Community Council.